IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

1. (Canceled).

2. (Currently amended) A pair of oligonucleotides for amplification of a target sequence of the genome of SARS coronavirus, said pair selected from the group consisting ~~essentially~~ of:

(a) a first oligonucleotide sequence of ~~being 10-50 nucleotides in length and comprising at least 10 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of~~:

~~SEQ ID NO:3: TCCACCAGGT GACCAGTTTA AACATCTT;~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:3;~~

SEQ ID NO:4: TAGTAGCTGT ACCGACTGGT TATGTT~~;~~, or

the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:4~~;~~,

~~SEQ ID NO:15: TCAGCCCCAG ATGGTACTTC T;~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:15;~~

~~SEQ ID NO:25: TTGGCATGGA AGTCACACCT T;~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:25;~~

and a second oligonucleotide sequence ~~being 10-50 nucleotides in length and comprising at least 10 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting~~ of:

SEQ ID NO:7: GAAGCTATTC GTCACGTTCG~~;~~, or

the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:7;

~~SEQ ID NO:8: TGCGTGGATT GGCTTTGATG T;~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:8;~~

~~SEQ ID NO:19: AGATTCCCTC GAGGCCAGGG CGT;~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:19;~~

~~SEQ ID NO:29: CAGAACAAAC CCAAGGAAAT T; and~~

~~the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:29~~

(b) a first oligonucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:3: TCCACCAGGT GACCAGTTTA AACATCTT, or the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:3, and a second oligonucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:8: TGCGTGGATT GGCTTTGATG T, or the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:8; (c) a first oligonucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:25: TTGGCATGGA AGTCACACCT T, or the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:25, and a second oligonucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:29: CAGAACAAAC CCAAGGAAAT T, or the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:29; and any combination thereof.

3-5. (Canceled).

6. (Previously Presented) A pair of oligonucleotides for amplification of a target sequence located within the gene encoding the nucleocapsid protein of the SARS coronavirus, said pair consisting essentially of:

a first oligonucleotide being 10-50 nucleotides in length and comprising at least 10 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:
SEQ ID NO:15: TCAGCCCCAG ATGGTACTTC T; and
the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:15; and

a second oligonucleotide being 10-50 nucleotides in length and comprising at least 10 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:
SEQ ID NO:19: AGATTCCCTC GAGGCCAGGG CGT; and
the complementary nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:19.

7-10. (Canceled).

11. (Previously Presented) The pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 2, wherein the first oligonucleotide is operably linked to a promoter sequence recognized by a DNA dependent RNA polymerase.

12. (Currently Amended) The pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 11, wherein the first oligonucleotide consists essentially of the nucleotide sequence of:
SEQ ID NO:9: aattctaata cgactcacta tagggAAGAT GTTTAAACTG GTCACCTGGT GGA,
SEQ ID NO:10: aattctaata cgactcacta tagggAACAT AACCAGTCGG TACAGCTACT A,
~~SEQ ID NO:39: aattctaata cgactcacta tagggAGAAG TACCATCTGG GGCTGA,~~ or
SEQ ID NO:42: aattctaata cgactcacta tagggAAGGT GTGACTTCCA TGCCAA.

13-14. (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) An oligonucleotide probe to detect an amplified target sequence located within the genome of SARS coronavirus, said target sequence amplified with the pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 2, wherein the probe comprises a molecular beacon selected from the group consisting of:
SEQ ID NO:13: 5'- [6-FAM]-ccatgggCTGTCATGCAACTAGAGATGCTGTcccatgg- [DabSyl]-3';
SEQ ID NO:45: 5'- [6-FAM]-cgcgatGTTCGTGCGTGGATTGGCTTatcgcg- [DabCyl]-3';
~~SEQ ID NO:22: 5'-[6-FAM]-ccatgggCTACTACCGAAGAGCTACCCGACGAcccatgg-[DabSyl]-3';~~ and
SEQ ID NO:30: 5'-[6-FAM]-ccatggACCAAGACCTAATCAGACAAccatgg- [DabSyl]-3'.

16. (Previously Presented) A method for detecting SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in a sample, comprising:

(a) employing the sample in a nucleic acid amplification reaction under conditions whereby amplification of SARS coronavirus nucleic acid can occur; and

(b) detecting amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in the sample using the pair of oligonucleotides of claim 2.

17. (Previously Presented) A method for detecting SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in a sample, comprising:

(a) contacting the sample with the pair of oligonucleotides of claim 2 under conditions whereby amplification of SARS coronavirus nucleic acid can occur; and

(b) detecting amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein detecting the amplified nucleic acid comprises contacting the amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid with an oligonucleotide probe under conditions whereby hybridization can occur, said probe comprising the oligonucleotide probe of claim 15.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the nucleic acid amplification comprises a NASBA transcription based amplification technique, and the first oligonucleotide is operably linked to a promoter sequence recognized by a DNA dependent RNA polymerase.

20. (Previously Presented) A test kit for the detection of SARS coronavirus in a sample, comprising:

the pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 2,

an oligonucleotide, for use as a probe, said probe comprising an oligonucleotide probe of claim 15, and

suitable amplification reagents.

21. (Previously Presented) The test kit according to claim 20, wherein the suitable amplification reagents enable a NASBA transcription based amplification technique.

22. (Canceled).

23. (New) The pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 6, wherein the first oligonucleotide is operably linked to a promoter sequence recognized by a DNA dependent RNA polymerase.

24. (New) The pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 23, wherein the first oligonucleotide consists essentially of the nucleotide sequence of:
SEQ ID NO:39: aattctaata cgactcacta tagggAGAAG TACCATCTGG GGCTGA.

25. (New) An oligonucleotide probe to detect an amplified target sequence located within the genome of SARS coronavirus, said target sequence amplified with the pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 6, wherein the probe comprises a molecular beacon of:
SEQ ID NO:22: 5'-[6-FAM]-ccatgggCTACTACCGAAGAGCTACCCGACGAcccatgg-[DabSyl]-3'.

26. (New) A method for detecting SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in a sample, comprising:

(a) employing the sample in a nucleic acid amplification reaction under conditions whereby amplification of SARS coronavirus nucleic acid can occur; and

(b) detecting amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in the sample using the pair of oligonucleotides of claim 6.

27 (New) A method for detecting SARS coronavirus nucleic acid in a sample, comprising:

(a) contacting the sample with the pair of oligonucleotides of claim 6 under conditions whereby amplification of SARS coronavirus nucleic acid can occur; and

(b) detecting amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid.

28. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein detecting the amplified nucleic acid comprises contacting the amplified SARS coronavirus nucleic acid with an oligonucleotide probe under conditions whereby hybridization can occur, said probe comprising the oligonucleotide probe of claim 25.

29. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein the nucleic acid amplification comprises a NASBA transcription based amplification technique, and the first oligonucleotide is operably linked to a promoter sequence recognized by a DNA dependent RNA polymerase.

30 (New) A test kit for the detection of SARS coronavirus in a sample, comprising:

the pair of oligonucleotides according to claim 6,

an oligonucleotide, for use as a probe, said probe comprising an oligonucleotide probe of claim 25, and

suitable amplification reagents.

31. (New) The test kit according to claim 30, wherein the suitable amplification reagents enable a NASBA transcription based amplification technique.